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**NAPPO STANDARDS
FOR
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

**GUIDELINES FOR PRECLEARANCE
PROGRAMS**

The Secretariat of the North American Plant Protection Organization
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Review

NAPPO Standards for Phytosanitary Measures are subject to periodic review and amendment. The next review date for this NAPPO standard is This standard was last reviewed in A review of any NAPPO Standard may be initiated at any time upon the request of a NAPPO member country.

Endorsement

This Standard was approved by the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) Executive Committee on

Approved by:

Executive Committee Member
CANADA

Executive Committee Member
UNITED STATES

Executive Committee Member
MEXICO

Amendment Record

Amendments to this Standard will be given a consecutive number, dated and filed with the NAPPO Secretariat.

Distribution

This standard is distributed by the Secretariat of the NAPPO within NAPPO, including Sustaining Associate Members and Industry Advisory Groups, to the FAO IPPC Secretariat, to the ICGPP, and to the Administrative Heads of the Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs). Copies are available upon request to the NAPPO Secretariat and are available on the NAPPO web page: www.nappo.org.

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE

This standard contains a framework for establishing preclearance programs between NAPPO member countries. It describes the advantages and disadvantages of preclearance programs and the different types of programs. It lists criteria for consideration prior to establishing such programs, it describes the different levels of preclearance and criteria for reducing or terminating these programs.

REFERENCES

FAO, 1999. Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms, Reference Standard, International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures, Publication, FAO, Rome, November 1999.

NAPPO, 1999. NAPPO Compendium of Phytosanitary Terms. NAPPO Secretariat, Nepean, Ontario, Canada, April 1999.

DEFINITIONS, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Audit inspection | An examination to determine the reliability of prescribed quarantine procedures (NAPPO) |
| Clearance (of a consignment) | Verification of compliance with phytosanitary regulations (FAO) |
| IPPC | Acronym for the International Plant Protection Convention, as deposited in 1951 with FAO in Rome and as subsequently amended (FAO) |
| NAPPO | Acronym for the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) |
| NPPO | Acronym for National Plant Protection Organization - the official service established by a government to discharge the functions specified by the IPPC (FAO) |
| Phytosanitary certificate | A certificate patterned after the model certificates of the IPPC (FAO) |
| Point of entry | Airport, seaport, or land border point officially designated for the importation of consignments, and/or entrance of passengers (FAO) |
| Preclearance | Phytosanitary certification and/or clearance in the country of origin, |

performed by or under the regular supervision of the National Plant Protection Organization of the country of destination (FAO)

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Quarantine pest | A pest of potential economic importance to the area endangered thereby and not yet present there, or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled (FAO) |
| Treatment | Officially authorized procedure for killing, removal or rendering infertile of plant pests. (FAO) |

OUTLINE OF REQUIREMENTS

Preclearance of agricultural commodities at origin has been accepted as a useful phytosanitary procedure to reduce the risk of spread of quarantine pests from one country to another. The application of phytosanitary procedures at origin, performed or monitored by representatives of the importing country, are aimed at ensuring that shipments of plants, plant products and other regulated articles meet the entry requirements of the importing country before they depart the exporting country.

In practical terms, preclearance may include the review of any or all pest control actions associated with the production and preparation of a commodity for export, including for example, inspection, testing, surveys, storage, record-keeping, transportation, etc. Bilateral agreements should spell out the technical details of the preclearance program as well as conditions for reduction or termination of the program.

Preclearance programs are designed to facilitate trade, but do not provide absolute guarantees that pests will not spread. Importing countries retain the right to carry out import inspections at points of entry.

There are advantages and disadvantages associated with preclearance programs, both for the importing and exporting country involved. Regular review of a preclearance program will ensure that benefits continue to outweigh the disadvantages.

1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for preclearance programs are usually negotiated between the importing and exporting countries. The request is usually made by importing or exporting industry representatives, but may also be pursuant to official import regulations of the importing country.

1.1 Criteria for establishment of preclearance programs

Several of the following factors need to be satisfied in order to justify a preclearance program. These include:

- the pest risk assessment indicates significant risk is associated with movement of the commodity;
- the quarantine pests are difficult to detect during inspection at the point of entry;
- a significant volume of the commodity makes the program economically feasible;
- inspection at destination would adversely affect commercial packaging and/or product quality (eg. product is perishable; product is individually wrapped);
- serious disadvantages arise from the need to un-load at the point of entry and the need for storage and inspection facilities at the point of entry;
- inspection and verification is significantly simplified at origin;
- the exporting country has a lack of resources and/or ability to conduct inspections;
- there is agreement between the industry of the exporting country and the NPPO in both countries to conduct a preclearance program;
- returning, re-exporting, treatment or other method of disposal (destruction, processing), in case of rejection at point of entry is costly, difficult or impossible; and
- similar preclearance programs with other countries have proven effective.

1.2 Bilateral Agreement

The technical requirements for preclearance programs need to be developed on a case-by-case basis, based on the risk assessment and risk management options available for the commodity and quarantine pest(s) in question, and should be spelled out in a bilateral agreement. It should describe all activities which will be carried out by the importing and exporting countries, duration of the activities, frequency of program reviews, reasons for modifying, suspending or terminating the program, etc. It should detail the technical requirements of the program as well as all administrative and financial arrangements. This latter agreement is generally implemented between the exporting industry and the importing NPPO.

Items to be described include the provision of facilities and supplies for inspection purposes, hours of work, duration of shipping season.

1.3 Levels of Preclearance Programs

Many factors come into play in the determination of the intensity of preclearance programs. The pest risk assessment, feasibility of risk management options and the ability of the exporting country to fulfill the requirements of the importing country (including production practices and competency of the NPPO) are examples of the factors which will need to be considered on a case by case basis.

Under some circumstances, the importing country may establish an ongoing inspection presence in the exporting country to monitor and/or perform production and certification activities and to inspect and/or test the commodity. This is a very intensive form of preclearance program and should only be used when there is justification to do so, or if requested by the exporting country. Requirements for inspection at the point of entry of the importing country should be minimal or non-existent. The importing country may decide to allow entry without requiring a phytosanitary certificate.

Less intensive preclearance programs are more common. In these circumstances, only the key production, certification, inspection and/or testing activities are observed or carried out in the exporting country by representatives of the importing country. This does not normally require an ongoing inspection presence by the importing country in the country of export. A phytosanitary certificate is issued by the exporting country and limited import inspections could be carried out in the importing country to verify compliance with the import requirements.

The level of preclearance can be reduced gradually until eventually the program is terminated.

1.4 Review of preclearance programs

The effectiveness of any preclearance program, whether intended to be permanent or temporary, should be reviewed regularly to identify, discuss and resolve problems and refine the program. Timing and frequency of review of the program should be described in the bilateral agreement. Depending on the program, some elements may need to be reviewed more often than others.

1.5 Duration of preclearance programs

Preclearance should be used discriminately and selectively, according to circumstances. NAPPO member countries should strive to rely on and recognize each other's systems of phytosanitary certification.

There may be situations when both countries agree that an ongoing preclearance program is the most effective and efficient way to facilitate the movement of plants, plant products and other regulated articles from the exporting country while providing adequate protection to the importing country. However, unless specific reasons exist to establish a permanent preclearance program, the importing and exporting countries should, when practical, define conditions which need to be satisfied in order to eliminate the monitoring or inspection presence of the importing country in the territory of the

exporting country.

Typically, termination of the program should be considered when the exporting country has demonstrated that it has the capacity to consistently meet the importing country requirements. Especially if the program was set up to facilitate the movement of a new commodity, or a commodity with which problems occurred in the past and changes were made to the phytosanitary certification procedures, termination could be based on the successful completion of one shipping season or a minimum number of shipments. Should pest problems arise, the preclearance program could be re-instated.

1.6 Costs

Costs for travel, accommodation, transportation and meal costs should be reasonable and justifiable. The importing country may have an established fee structure as part of its regular policy framework for work carried out in other countries. These fees should then be presented to the exporting country or the party responsible for the cost of the program. The costs should be agreed between the importing party responsible for assigning the inspectors for the preclearance program and the exporting industry. Any activities are subject to and must comply with the laws and regulations of the country in which the preclearance is carried out. The costs should normally be borne by the industry group benefiting from the preclearance program, although this could be negotiated between industry groups and the NPPOs. High costs are no reason to consider preclearance a barrier to trade. High costs should be a reason to look for alternative phytosanitary measures.

2. APPENDIX

1. Review of Advantages and Disadvantages of Preclearance

REVIEW OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PRECLEARANCE

In order to determine whether a preclearance program is feasible, the following advantages and disadvantages should be considered:

1 Advantages:

1.1 To the Importing Country

- Preclearance will reduce the risk of introducing quarantine pests.
- Preclearance usually affords the opportunity for a more thorough and more easily accomplished inspection at origin than would otherwise occur.
- Preclearance provides an opportunity to observe the inspection processes and surveys of the exporting country. It also provides the opportunity to share information and experience which may contribute to building confidence in the program and between the NPPOs.
- Preclearance allows for a more controlled inspection process than at a busy point of entry in the importing country.

1.2 To the Exporting Country

- Preclearance provides a greater assurance that the goods will not be rejected at destination because of pest problems.
- In certain cases preclearance may represent the most practical method to accommodate exports, e.g. materials which are pre-packaged for consumers.
- Substitution or redirection of product can take place at origin if consignments do not meet the requirements of the importing country, thus avoiding the costs associated with product rejected at destination.
- Bilateral agreements clearly identify the importing country requirements.
- Preclearance may be in place to assist the exporting country because they lack the capability to adequately execute programs or components of programs.
- Preclearance provides immediate feedback on pest problems.

- Pest identification expertise for pests occurring in the exporting country is readily available, due to familiarity with the pests.
- It allows for movement of plants, plant products and other regulated articles which might otherwise be prohibited.
- It enables both NPPO to share the workload in order to facilitate trade.
- Perishable product losses can be reduced by avoiding delays at the importing country point of entry.

2 Disadvantages:

- Travel, accommodation and salary costs may be prohibitive. The value of the product, the volume of material being shipped and the duration of the shipping season may not warrant a preclearance program.
- Preclearance programs may give the appearance of a lack of confidence in the NPPO of the exporting country and the international phytosanitary certificate.
- Costs may appear high in comparison with costs of non-preclearance export and import programs.
- Preclearance does not give a guaranteed entry into the importing country.